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May 4, 2010

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MEDIA NOTE: A low-resolution photo of Alexis Snyder from Lamarque Elementary School is attached. Please call for a high-resolution photo.

County students without insurance get free vision exams and eyeglasses

Fifty-six students from Sarasota County schools who do not have health or vision insurance recently received free eye exams from a vision technician and optometrist. The vision exams and free eyeglasses valued at nearly \$8,000 were available through the Florida Vision Quest Mobile Unit program.

Funded by the Florida Department of Health's School Health Office, this outreach program helps students without insurance get the follow-up care needed for healthy sight. One of the major financial sponsors which outfitted this particular Vision Mobile Unit is the Glazer Family Foundation of Tampa Bay Buccaneers fame.

As a joint effort with the Sarasota County Health Department and the Sarasota County School District, school nurses from both organizations contacted parents of children who did not pass the student vision screening to notify them about the program. The School Transportation Department arranged for students from 10 local schools to get to the mobile unit.

"We are extremely grateful for the time donated by the Florida Vision Quest eye care specialists who traveled nearly four hours to provide this needed service," said Linda Glover, R.N., school health supervisor for the Sarasota County Health Department. "Each student chose and was fitted with their own personal frames. Two weeks later, the glasses were sent to the student's school where they were dispensed by the school nurse."

For more information about this program, contact the Sarasota County Health Department's School Health Office at 941-927-9000, ext. 32101, or visit <http://www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/schoolhealth/>.